

Sounds like somebody is getting a tax hike. No wonder the bill was written in the secret caverns out of public view in this Capitol.

And that's just the way it is.

POSITIVE UPDATE ON RECOVERY PACKAGE

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give a positive update on the progress of the recovery package.

When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act came before Congress earlier this year, I had to make a tough decision on how I would vote. I am happy that I voted for the recovery.

We have had recovery funds go towards improving infrastructure, funding our medical research, and improving our schools for our children. Just last week, my district received over \$20 million in stimulus funds to improve water quality and almost \$2 million in medical research funding.

The positive impacts of this legislation are being seen across the State of Ohio and the country. A report recently shows that the Recovery Act has saved or created about 1 million jobs. In fact, in the last month, unemployment has dropped in each of the 12 counties that I represent in Ohio.

With almost three-fourths of the stimulus funds still set to be released, I expect to see additional jobs saved and created across the country and in my district. I am excited to see the progress that we are making and will continue to make.

SUCCESS IN AFGHANISTAN IS VITAL TO PROTECTING AMERICAN FAMILIES

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, President Obama was correct when he stated as a candidate for President last year, "Our troops and our NATO allies are performing heroically in Afghanistan, but I have argued for years that we lack the resources to finish the job . . . And that is why, as President, I will make the fight against al Qaeda the top priority that it should be. This is a war we have to win."

Our President has chosen CENTCOM Commander David Petraeus and General Stanley McChrystal to implement a strategy in Afghanistan that would train Afghan security forces, destroy terrorist elements, prevent the Taliban from providing safe haven to terrorists, and promote political and civil development in Afghanistan.

Moving forward, we must provide the reinforcements that General McChrystal has requested. Indecision will only endanger our soldiers and empower our enemies.

I agree with Vice President Dick Cheney: The President is dithering. Democrats and Republicans should join, as President Obama said in his Democratic acceptance speech, to finish the fight against the terrorists.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY IN HEALTH CARE PRICING

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, isn't it time we had transparency in all health care pricing? Wouldn't you like to know the price of a pill before you buy it? Wouldn't you like to know the price of the greatest discount a hospital offered at your location? Wouldn't you like to know the lowest price an insurance company accepted for payment in full for their health insurance policy?

This is a picture of several pills you can buy at a grocery store, and the price is always openly disclosed. Isn't it time that Congress passed legislation to guarantee that, at all times, any business entity that offers medical products and services for sale to the public openly disclose all of their prices and then accept the lowest price from everybody that they have accepted from anybody else? Isn't it time we had transparency in health care pricing?

THE FORGOTTEN U.S. TAXPAYER

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the forgotten U.S. taxpayer. On Wednesday, Neil Barofsky, the special inspector general overseeing TARP, said that recouping the billions of dollars given to the insurer AIG and automakers GM and Chrysler "is far from certain." He also noted that \$50 billion set aside to help struggling homeowners lower their mortgage payments will yield "no direct return."

Also on Wednesday, the former chief of the Obama administration's task force on the auto industry, Steven Rattner, commented on the \$20 billion previously lent to GM, "I don't think we are going to see it again," meaning that all the money is gone.

What is wrong with this picture? \$50 billion here, \$20 billion there. What am I missing? How can we spend, spend, spend without any accountability?

I am concerned as I travel across Kansas, my great State, that I hear countless Kansans express doubts that Congress and bureaucrats would make wise decisions with their tax dollars. They were right. With some of these unwise investment decisions that I mentioned today, I think a dose of Kansas commonsense is desperately needed in Washington, DC.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, many victims of domestic violence are afraid to tell their story. They are afraid to get help or don't know how. These men, women, and children need someone to stand up for them, to know where to turn. That is what Domestic Violence Awareness Month is all about. In fact, this October is the 20th anniversary of legislation to establish this event.

Domestic violence is shockingly common. One in four American women and almost 10 percent of men will be sexually or physically assaulted by a spouse, intimate partner, or acquaintance at some point in their life.

I strongly support full funding of domestic violence programs for fiscal year 2010. This money is sorely needed. According to a recent study, last year, on one day alone, 10,000 people were turned away from local domestic violence programs due to a lack of resources.

I pledge to work on behalf of domestic violence victims here in Congress. I want survivors to know how much I respect and commend them for their bravery, and I want them to know there are services and support groups that can help.

CONGRATULATING FORT BEND, TEXAS

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my home county of Fort Bend, Texas, for having the third highest increase in jobs during the first quarter of last year among the Nation's largest 334 counties. It is impressive, given that of those 334 counties, only eight saw any job increase at all.

We already know what a special place Fort Bend is to live and raise a family. For more than 15 years, Fort Bend has been in the top 20 counties in the United States for economic excellence and population growth. Excellent schools, affordable housing, and extensive recreational facilities have attracted families with impressive demographic profiles. And this creates a local employment base that provides relocating companies with a diverse mix of professional, technical, skilled, and unskilled labor with the highest educational attainment levels in the region.

I am very proud of Fort Bend County for this economic accomplishment, and my family and I feel very fortunate to call it home.

SENATE EXERCISING PETTY PARTISANSHIP ON UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, exactly one month ago today the House cast aside partisanship to work together and overwhelmingly pass legislation to extend unemployment benefits, which are running out for an average of 7,000 Americans every day.

While my Republican colleagues in the House recognize that unemployment is an American issue that transcends politics, Senate Republicans are oblivious to the urgent need to pass legislation because people are hanging on by their fingernails. Instead, the Senate Republicans have a choke hold on legislation to extend unemployment insurance benefits, and Americans who need the help the House passed a month ago aren't going to get helped until Senate Republicans stop playing partisan games.

There are positive signs the economy has turned the corner, but the Senate Republicans know what everyone else knows, that unemployment always takes longer to recover. But they still have a choke hold on the bill, which is a choke hold on nurturing the economic recovery.

A caller to my office this morning put it best: There is one reason you may not be able to buy food for your family next week, and it is called the Senate Republicans. Maybe they are the ones who ought to be out of work.

Maybe then the Republicans in the Senate would understand what it means to look to Washington for leadership but see petty partisanship instead.

Release the choke hold and pass the bill to extend unemployment benefits. Thousands of Americans can wait no longer.

□ 0915

EXPRESSING CONCERN REGARDING THE EFFECT OF PROPOSED HEALTH CARE REFORM ON SMALL BUSINESSES

(Mr. KLINE of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about the majority party's proposed government takeover of health care and its devastating consequences for small businesses across the Nation. Despite continued calls from me and my Republican colleagues for a bipartisan approach that expands access to affordable health care to all Americans, the majority party insists on engaging in closed door meetings that ignore the input of a significant proportion of Congress and the millions of constituents they represent.

Among the most damaging elements of their proposal is a punitive new tax on small businesses that cannot afford to provide the coverage the Federal Government decides is acceptable. My Republican colleagues on the Education and Labor Committee offered numerous amendments to protect the small businesses that drive our economy from these and other burdensome mandates that threaten their viability, but our attempts were rejected.

Madam Speaker, it is time to push the reset button on this flawed proposal. Members of all political persuasions need to start fresh and work in good faith to bring meaningful health care reform to our constituents and keep our small businesses thriving.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2010

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CHU). Pursuant to House Resolution 853 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3619.

□ 0915

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3619) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes, with Mr. PASTOR of Arizona (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Thursday, October 22, 2009, amendment No. 6 offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) had been disposed of.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. FLAKE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 111-311.

Mr. FLAKE. I have an amendment at the desk designated No. 7.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 7 offered by Mr. FLAKE:

Page 182, after line 14, insert the following:

(g) PROHIBITION ON EARMARKS.—None of the funds appropriated for the Fishing Safety Training Grants Program pursuant to section 4502(i) of title 46, United States Code, as amended by this section, may be used for a Congressional earmark as defined in clause 9(d) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 853, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. This amendment is straightforward and, I believe, non-

controversial. It should be familiar to those of us here. The underlying bill establishes a new competitive grant program called the Fishing Safety Training Grants program. This amendment would simply prevent the new grant program from being a vehicle for earmarking.

I try to offer this amendment as often as I can when new grant programs are established. The reason I do this is because, unfortunately, we have a history now of these grant programs being established and, even if the underlying legislation says that they are to be awarded on the basis of merit or on a competitive basis, then, oftentimes, a little down the road, many of these grant programs are earmarked, some of them, we have learned through sad experience, almost completely earmarked.

Competitive grant programs earmarked by Members of this body, we simply can't have that. Now, I question why the Federal Government is using taxpayer dollars to fund training for individuals who operate commercial fishing vessels. I think that that's something that commercial fishing organizations ought to do themselves. However, if we are going to do this, then we should at least ensure that these grants are awarded on a competitive basis and aren't earmarked.

And so I hope that this can be adopted. I should note that in the 110th Congress, this similar amendment was adopted to H.R. 2357, the Beach Protection Act. It was approved by a roll call vote of 263-117. And in the 111th Congress, this amendment was accepted on three separate occasions, each time by voice vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition, though I do not intend to oppose the gentleman.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Minnesota is recognized.

There was no objection.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I want to compliment the House's own version of Survivor Man, not only on surviving on a desert island and doing so very skillfully and astutely. Most of the time when Members of our body wind up with a story in The Washington Post, it's for some misdeed or misappropriation of funds. This was a remarkable story of personal strength and courage that I suspect derives from the gentleman's own upbringing and mission abroad for the church, and for his ability to survive under difficult conditions.

He's also been a survivor on his campaign, Mr. Chairman, to limit earmarks. And this is one case in which our committee agrees with the gentleman. On Page 177, Lines 4 and 5, the bill reads: the Secretary shall award grants under this subsection on a competitive basis. But also, as the gentleman has pointed out, notwithstanding such language in other bills,